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Summertime Refreshment: A Trip To Iceland

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Staff Writer

Traveling is serious business for Warrenton native Frank Holt. It involves months of reading about the country to be visited and weeks of studying maps. It involves days devoted to detailed scheduling and plotting of routes. And it involves the flexibility to dispense with well-made plans when opportunity knocks.

This is essentially what Holt did on the first day of a three-and-a-half week jaunt around Iceland.

"I had just finished putting up my tent," Holt said. "I was proud. I stood back and thought, 'This is good enough for a photo.' Then a French couple I had met earlier drove up in a Lada—a Russian-built Fiat — and asked me if I'd like to ride with them into the interior. I had my trip all mapped out. When I showed them my plans, they said they'd be going to all the places I had marked. So I thought, 'Why not?' I grabbed a few hygiene essentials, my backpack, and jumped in."

The couple's invitation was backed by impressive credentials. He was a world expedition tour guide whose list of adventures included scuba diving along the Great Barrier Reef, and she was a photo-journalist with GEO, a highly-touted magazine of people and places throughout the world.

Holt, a 1980 graduate of the University of North Carolina with a major in geography, was appreciative of the couple's consideration of him during their travels. "They even spoke English 70 percent of the time," he said. "After all, they didn't have to."

The trek into the interior of Iceland was only part of a trip that featured a swim in a geo-thermal hot-spring and a feast of caviar, smoked trout, and halibut at an end-of-the-road farmhouse.

The trip to Iceland was Holt's second. He made his first with his father, Dr. Tom Holt, of Warrenton last March. But that trip was only the prelude to the kind of travel the younger Holt prefers.

"For me, travel is meeting people, seeing the mountains, waterfalls, the quaint villages, and getting a feel for the diversity of the people," he said.

In terms of culture, Holt favors the polar region. "A lot of people think Iceland is just an iceberg off the coast of Greenland," Holt said, aware of the truth in his humor. "But that's a misconception. Iceland's society is very intellectual. The country has virtually no illiteracy and English is spoken to some degree by all Icelanders."

While Americans today labor to make sense of Shakespeare's English, people of Iceland read with no effort sagas written a thousand years ago.

The language has remained pure," Holt commented. "The Norse language has not been diluted like English."

Iceland is an island about the size of the state of Virginia with a population of 250,000.

The country's devotion to literature is apparent in the fact that almost every home has a library and the writing of books has been called the national pastime. There are no fewer than 30 publishing houses in Iceland publishing more books per capita than any other nation.

Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, boasts six daily newspapers with a countrywide circulation of about 100,000 copies.

Icelanders also pride themselves on the oldest existing Parliament in the world, dating back to 930 A.D. The current president of Iceland is the first woman ever elected president of a democratic country.

Holt was impressed by the country's high standard of living. "Mercedes and BMWs are very common," he said. "But in Iceland, they are really driven."

The country has only 120 miles of paved highway, mostly on the coastal perimeter which is open year-round. Other roads are more accurately called tracks, and potholes as we know them are minor compared to the rugged terrain of the tracks.

"Iceland is known for its volcanoes which have left rocky lava formations, and these formations are what you spend a good deal of time driving over," Holt said.

Out of some 200 post-glacial volcanoes, at least 30 have erupted during the last 1,100 years. The number of recorded eruptions exceeds 150 with an average of one every five years. The latest volcanic activity was in August of 1980. It lasted only a few days but produced a large amount of lava.

The lava formations in the interior of Iceland are aptly compared to the surface of the moon — so much so that NASA used the area as a test site for lunar mobile training.

Holt enjoyed his first swim of the summer in one of Iceland's many geo-thermal hot springs. "It was filled with what we might call mud, but it was an entirely different consistency. It was silver and gray and very pure." He added that swimming in Iceland is in the buff, which takes some getting used to. "I mean, there are no trees or shrubs in the interior — nothing to hide behind."

Iceland is richer in hot springs and thermal activity than any other country in the world. There are 14 high temperature fields, characterized by steam holes, bubbling mud pools and the precipitation of sulphur and silica.

Pollution is virtually non-existent and the water is very pure. The natives intend to keep it that way.

Although fishing is the foundation of the country's economy, there's no need for tourists to think they can simply whip out their bamboo fishing pole, drop

the line, and wait for the catch.

"I met a girl on the plane who was planning to fish," Holt said. "I had read from U. S. State Department information that a fishing permit in Iceland would cost \$150 to \$300 for a site on a creek. Well, this girl paid \$4,200 for a permit for a week of fishing, 15 hours a day."

"If the price of the permit doesn't scare you off," Holt said, "you can make your preparations, which include sterilizing all your fishing equipment and having certification that it has been done."

Holt passed on the fishing expedition. But apparently the price of the permit and the bother of sterilizing equipment doesn't deter everyone.

"In the airport on the way up, I met Jack Nicklaus who was going to Iceland to fish," Holt said. "I asked him if he thought the PGA would ever consider putting a course at Iceland's capital, Reykjavik, on the tour. He didn't say much and wasn't too friendly, but his wife was nice."

Holt took only the necessities on his trip, and when he wasn't camping out, he stayed in youth hostels. But he doesn't advise trying to travel in Iceland

without adequate monetary backup.

"The cost of living is high," he commented. "The average yearly wage is \$7,500, but the average breakfast in a restaurant is about \$5.50 and a Coca-Cola is \$1.20. The cities are very modern. There are even discos around and entertainment goes on until 2 a. m. Of course, drinks are about \$7.50 each."

Holt was moved by the openness and honesty of the Icelanders. There is little fear of crime. A year ago someone was murdered in the country. "I heard that the story stayed in the papers for a week. People were shocked. How could one Icelander kill another?"

Holt described the people as individualistic and independent, yet very hospitable. He was traveling alone much of the time, but he found that doors seemed to open to him all along the way.

"The only thing I had to get used to was the interior, which is sparsely populated, remote, and lacking in vegetation. "Usually you can find some comfort in a tree here and there, but in the interior, you're really alone."

High Winds Rip Homes Near Oine

High winds, accompanied by heavy rains and some hail, destroyed one home, blew another trailer off its foundation and blew the glass out of the front door of another home in White's Trailer Park on the Oine Road near Norlina between 2:30 p.m. and 2:45 p.m. on Tuesday, according to Norlina Police Chief Romey Williams.

Chief Williams, who was off duty yesterday, said that he had taken his niece, Lois Jefferson, to her home and was in her home when the storm struck the park.

Completely destroyed was the home of John Falcon, with the roof blown off and scattered, and other damage resulting, Chief Williams said. In addition, he added, the home of Carlis Jordan was blown off its foundation, and the glass in the front door of the home of Tom Talley was blown out.

Improvements For Highways In Area Listed

RALEIGH — Contracts approved by the state Board of Transportation in its meeting last week included highway improvements in Vance and Warren counties.

A contract to resurface two sections of I-85 was awarded to S. T. Wooten Construction Company of Wilson for \$637,521.55. It calls for repairing the interstate from US-158 at the northwest limits of Henderson to US-158 at the northeast limits of the city and from US-1 to the Virginia state line.

Work on the three-mile project is scheduled to begin in September and is expected to be completed in December 1982.

Board member Joe C. Hamme of Oxford commented, "I am extremely pleased with the award of this contract. These portions of I-85 have deteriorated a great deal and need repairing."



Mrs. Robert Stegall, deputy Warren County clerk of court, administers an oath to Richard H. Greene, Warrenton businessman named by Governor Hunt to the N. C. Rural Electrification Authority. Greene took the oath of office on Monday. (Staff Photo)

Greene Named To State Post By Governor

Richard H. Greene, Warrenton businessman, has been appointed by North Carolina's Governor Jim Hunt to the North Carolina Rural Electrification Authority. Greene has served as a board member of the Halifax Electric Membership Corporation for nine years.

He is the owner of the R. H. Greene Funeral Home, and owner and sales manager of the R. H. Greene Insurance Agency. He is also the secretary-treasurer of the Warren County Mutual Burial Association. He is a member of the New Bethel Baptist Church in Macon, where he serves as a deacon and secretary of the church.

Greene is married to the former Valrie Palmer and they have one daughter, Annetta.

Motorcycle Theft Reported in Warren

Theft of a 1979 blue Kawasaki motorcycle was reported to the office of the Warren County Sheriff at 11:30 a. m. Saturday by David Allen Zeigler of Red Bud Point, Lake Gaston Lake, Littleton. Deputy Lloyd Newsome is investigating the case.

Zeigler said that the motorcycle was parked in the driveway of his residence.

Funds Allocated For Use Locally

The Warren County Department of Social Services has been allocated \$93,907 in federal and state funding for day care services in the county during the fiscal year 1982-83, according to information released recently by Dr. Sarah T. Morrow, secretary of the N. C. Department of Human Resources.

The federal government's Title XX program provided \$69,181 of the funding and the N. C. General Assembly provided \$24,726.

Statewide, \$19.6 million in federal and state funding was allocated for day care services in the state. Of that amount, the N. C. General Assembly appropriated \$6.9 million.

The funds will be used by county departments of social services and Appalachian Regional Commission child development programs to help provide day care for an estimated 13,500 children from low-income families in the state.

Brenda Taylor, a social worker with the Warren County Department of Social Services, said that the department is now contracting with four day care centers in the county for service to 31 children. She indicated that

\$36,000 of the funding allocated to Warren County is for the Child Development Center in Warrenton. State regulation requires that North (Continued on page 6)

Wounded Man's Condition Reported 'Stable' At Duke

Willie Cooper was on Tuesday morning reported to be in stable condition in Duke Medical Center in Durham after being shot in the right chest with a 22-calibre handgun on Sunday night by his wife Candice Cooper during a domestic argument, according to information received yesterday from the office of the Warren County Sheriff.

The shooting occurred on the side of State Road 1001, between Warrenton and Henderson, and was reported to Warren offices by Maria Parham Hospital at 9:30 p. m. Sunday. Harold L. Seaman is the investigating officer.

According to information given to Deputy Sheriff by Mrs. Cooper, the shooting occurred as the result of a domestic argument. At the time

she shot her husband they had been driving separate cars, and he had forced her to stop, and was harassing her when she shot him with a 22-calibre pistol. Cooper was taken to Maria Parham Hospital in Henderson by a private car and transferred from there to Duke Medical Center by ambulance, where his condition did not permit questioning by the police.

Mrs. Cooper, who gave herself up, and was released on her own recognizance, was charged with assault with a deadly weapon, inflicting serious bodily harm. A hearing has been set for Sept. 29. Sheriff Davis explained yesterday that late hearing was set pending the outcome of Cooper's injuries. He said that Mrs. Cooper has been at

But Holt has found in his travels that you can never really get away. In New York, before boarding the flight for Iceland, he went into a restaurant and ordered coffee and eggs. His accent brought an inquiry from the man seated next to him. "You from the South?" Holt answered affirmatively and in a few moments it became apparent that a man from Wise and a man from Warrenton had somehow crossed paths in New York City.

Holt is ready to hit the road again. This time he's headed for the deep South — New Orleans and Alabama. "I've been to the polar region and now I'm going into the South," he said. Talk about going from one extreme to the other pursued before Holt said, "I figure I fit somewhere within this spectrum."

Holt may stop in Atlanta to check into some job possibilities, ones that involve travel and tourism. "But I've found that I'm sort of lucky. If I don't push, things will fall into place. And if my luck runs out, well, that's O.K. too."

Only One Bid Received For Warren Land

Only one bid was received yesterday (Tuesday) on land up for sale in Soul City, according to Charles Worth, a Soul City resident and assets manager of the property.

Five parcels are for sale, and the only bid received was \$35,650 on an 89-acre tract. That bid was submitted by Attorney Joyce Wilkerson of Philadelphia, Pa., according to Worth.

Previous reports indicated that the federal government hoped to close the land sales within 30 days after the Tuesday opening of bids.

However, no bids were made on the other four tracts, and Worth stressed that even though one bid was received, it does not bind the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's New Communities Development Cor-

poration to accept the bid.

The corporation, an agency within HUD, decided to sell the Soul City property last spring for industrial, commercial and residential use.

The federally-owned town was initiated in 1974 by former civil rights leader Floyd McKissick and a group of his followers.

A total of \$29 million in federal grants and loans was obtained by the development until 1978 when the project was abandoned.

Two parcels of land in Soul City have already been purchased. Purdue Farms, a chicken-processing corporation, has purchased a 500-acre tract, and McKissick has purchased a 70-acre tract.

Purdue Farms is not developing its tract at the present, due to economic conditions.

Duke with her husband several times this week.

The Coopers operate Club 43 at Liberia, on Rt. 3, Warrenton.

Flames Cause Loss Of Barn

Loss to a tobacco barn and tobacco as the result of a fire on Monday night near Warrenton was estimated by Fire Chief A. A. Wood at \$2,000.

Wood said the fire occurred five miles from Warrenton in the Axtelle Community on property owned by Mary Catherine Monroe.

Tobacco in the barn was totally destroyed and was owned by William Harris.

Wood said that firefighters were able to save some equipment in a nearby shed.